[ROTPUNKT]

X

PINCH POINT

REIMAGINING THEATRE

WITH

Theatre After The Screen

There is a growing sense of performance in the everyday – not as spectacle, but as presence. A room shared by bodies, the attention briefly aligned, the friction between seeing and being seen. In a culture dominated by screens, metrics and mediated distance, in-person performance now feels confrontational. Radical, even.

Once dismissed as obsolete or inaccessible, theatre is quietly reclaiming ground by insisting on what only it can offer. The Adelaide-based collective, Rotpunkt, sits squarely within this shift, defining their work through immediacy, effort, and a refusal to treat theatre as a dying art form.

Founded in 2024 by Flinders Drama Centre graduates, Franca Lafosse, Lauren Jones, Shant Becker and Luke Furlan, Rotpunkt emerged not as a university vanity project, but a need for independent experimentation. What began as a single scene written for coursework continued expanding, until it was clear that for such a work to exist, they would have to produce it themselves. And so, the collective was formed out of a refusal to stop making, and a recognition that doing it independently was not only feasible, but more honest.

However, beneath this pragmatism lies a sharper critique. Rotpunkt's identity has been shaped by a shared frustration with the low expectations that often surround theatre, particularly at the independent level. There is a prevailing belief that theatre is allowed, even expected, to be boring. That minimal resources excuse minimal ambition. But Rotpunkt disagrees. Lowering standards does not protect theatre, but entrenches marginalisation. If theatre is consistently framed as dull, inaccessible or indifferent to its audience, it's no surprise that many people conclude they "don't like theatre". Yet, more often than not, what they dislike is *bad* theatre.

This frustration is intensified by comparison with film. Film's

scale and distribution leave audiences disproportionately exposed to its best work, while mediocrity is filtered out by budgets, distribution and marketing. Theatre, by contrast, is encountered locally and sporadically. For many people, their only reference points are amateur productions, school plays or shows attended out of obligation rather than curiosity. Over time, this imbalance hardens into the assumption that film is vital and sophisticated, while theatre is antiquated. Even theatre makers internalise this narrative, treating the art form as something to be preserved out of duty rather than belief.

Rotpunkt rejects this narrative. Their work isn't about preservation; it's about activation. Theatre, to them, is valuable not despite its limitations, but because of them. Its power lies in shared presence, allowing performers and audiences to share space, exchange energy, and affect one another in real time. The force created when an actor meets a spectator's gaze; when a laugh alters an entire scene's rhythm; when the room itself becomes a participant. These moments cannot be replicated on screen. And when theatre pretends otherwise, behaving as though an invisible barrier separates stage and audience, it forfeits its own reason for being.

This insistence on presence places Rotpunkt in direct opposition to contemporary media habits. Today's content is designed for distraction, consumed alongside notifications and divided attention. Theatre demands the opposite. It is durational, exposed unforgiving, and that is precisely the point. Theatre functions as a counter-practice – a space where attention is not optional, but collective, and where the discomfort of being completely present is fundamental to the experience.

That ethos extends beyond the stage. Rotpunkt deliberately situates performances in spaces where people already gather, rather than expecting audiences to adopt the rituals of traditional theatre going. Theatre, in

their terms, is hospitality-adjacent: a live exchange not unlike serving a drink or making a coffee, where meaning accumulates through small, shared gestures. Their shows bleed into conversations at the bar; into argument, connection and reflection. Applause is just the beginning.

This approach challenges another entrenched convention: that confusion should be concealed rather than explored. Rotpunkt thrives on questions. They invite audiences to articulate what worked, what didn't, and why. Theatre here is not a sealed object delivered to passive recipients, but a provocation that unfolds over time.

At the core of this philosophy is a re-evaluation of theatre's social function. Rotpunkt describe theatre as "peasants' media"—not as an insult, but as a reminder of its origins and potential. Historically, theatre was loud, excessive, and accessible. Shakespeare wasn't revered for his subtlety, but because his work was visceral, melodramatic, and immediately engaging. It engaged with ghosts, violence, and desire, and was designed to be consumed collectively, often in noisy, distracted environments. Theatre was never meant to be precious.

The irony is that theatre has become culturally expensive, while film — once the industrial art form — is now consumed casually and endlessly. The reversal mirrors broader cultural shifts. Vinyl records, once everyday objects, are now luxury items; streaming, once miraculous, has become numbing. In response, there is a renewed appetite for analogue experiences: physical books, downloaded music, board games, tabletop role-playing. These practices prioritise tactility, commitment, and shared time. Theatre fits naturally within this movement—not as nostalgia, but as resistance to frictionless consumption.

Rotpunkt's work sits firmly within this return to the tangible. They are not interested in refinement for its own sake, nor in competing with film on cinematic terms. Instead, they embrace theatre's bluntness. Theatre can be dumb, they argue—not thoughtless, but direct, excessive, and undeniable. It cuts through irony and detachment by demanding a response.

Theatre of the everyday does not require grandeur or illusion. It requires effort, risk, and the willingness to fail in front of others. What Rotpunkt models is not just an aesthetic, but an ethic. By re-centring presence, conversation, and shared attention, they abolish our desire to preserve theatre and instead, present it as a necessary interruption. Because theatre survives not by insisting on its importance, but by proving its immediacy, again and again.

The Rotpunkt Story

Rotpunkt do not consider theatre a sealed-off institution. Instead, they see theatre as a lived experience: argued over at the bar, shaped by those who show up, and emotionally charged by the fact that everyone in a room is sharing the same moment. Emerging out of Adelaide's independent arts scene, the collective have quickly built a name defined not purely by what they make, but by how and where they make it. And their upcoming production of Sartre's NO EXIT at Ern Malley only solidifies their performative values.

Why 'Rotpunkt'?

Beneath the rebellious-sounding exterior of their name, the origins of Rotpunkt lie in a much deeper philosophy. Deriving from the German rock-climbing term translating "red point", this name describes the successful completion of a climb that previously could not be finished. And it is that sentiment that the founders of Rotpunkt hold in the core of their work. It is not about effortless mastery, but the persistence that allows you to return to the same problem, fail and try again. "To climb at your red point is to be at your limit. You won't be able to get it on the first try." This name also connects deeply to the group's cultural makeup. With combined cultures of Argentine, German-Indian and Italian, language and translation are constant presences in their work. Choosing a German term was not arbitrary, but reflective of how cultural differences shape their conversations and rehearsals rooms.

And on stage, this naming builds their deliberate aesthetics. The collective approach their branding as primary rather than secondary, believing that to care about your name is to "care about your audience." This care brings joy off the stage and into every interaction with them and their creativity, ensuring that every person's experience with Rotpunkt remains memorable.

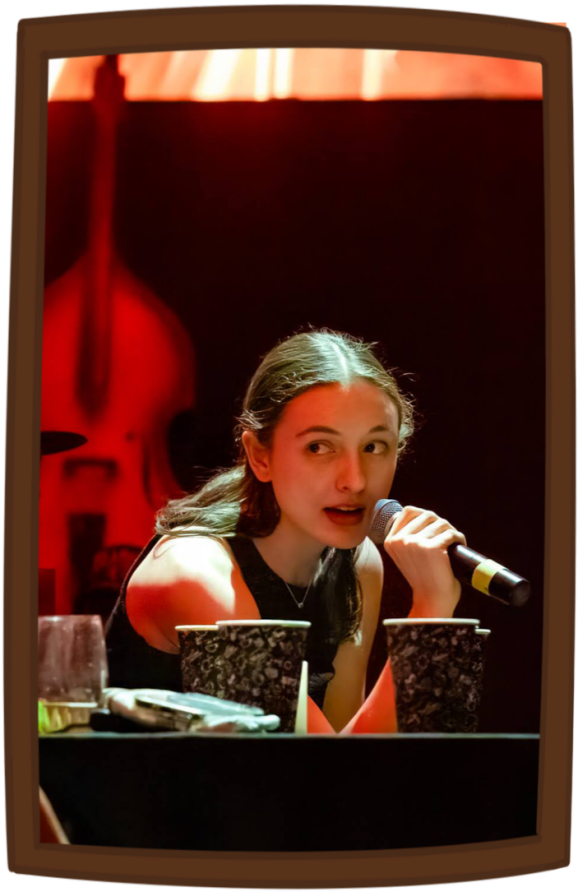
The Founders

Franca Lafosse

Franca grew up in Argentina, where arts education was directly woven into her daily schooling. While mornings were dedicated to STEM, her afternoons were spent in art school, learning music, dance, visual arts and performance with minimal resources. It was this experience that instilled the "mentality of using whatever we have and making magic out of it", and that's the mantra that she continues to follow.

After moving to Australia, drama became a space where Franca felt most at ease. "Drama was one class where I was like, 'I understand these people and they understand me'." For Franca, theatre has always been about connection – about the capacity to be transported while remaining deeply aware of those sharing that same moment.

Lauren Jones



Lauren's relationship with theatre began through storytelling rather than performance. As a child, she found herself deeply invested in fandom and their ability to "help [her] form her identity and find friendship and connection with other people". Theatre became the medium that best aligned with this impulse, particularly because of its immediacy. "With film, you might film it and then it's not done for two years…but in theatre, you rehearse for five weeks and then you perform it and then it's over. And that's the only time that production is ever going to happen." That ephemerality is a form of magic in Lauren's eyes. Theatre's temporality allows her to create a sense of community that, while brief, is strongly bound by shared attention. It is this social and emotional immediacy that continues to anchor her practice within Rotpunkt.

Luke Furlan

Luke's relationship with theatre was shaped by the act of 'being present'. Growing up, theatre was a chance to see people perform in something imperfect, which contrasted the increasingly polished world of film and streaming. It was this unpredictability that captured Luke's attention: the possibility that you might not enjoy it, but would still be moved by the shared experience of watching something unfold in real time. Some of Luke's earliest experiences were shared with his Nonna, who didn't speak English, and his mum, with each teaching him the value of performative engagement through movement, story and atmosphere. "We all got to enjoy it together, and that's something I'm very grateful for." It was this time that cemented theatre as a uniquely accessible and communal art form, and continues to underpin Luke's practice as both an actor and producer.

Through Rotpunkt, he is committed to creating work that is multicultural, affordable, and embedded in everyday social spaces. By bringing theatre to pubs, bars and non-traditional venues, Luke hopes Rotpunkt will solidify theatre as a part of a night out – a place of liveliness and immediacy that people can stumble into, rather than seek permission to access.

Shant Beeker

Shant's entered theatre more pragmatically than romantically. Growing up, acting was the goal, and theatre was simply a readily available pathway. "When you're in year six, what are you going to do? The play." It was only with time that the true value of theatre became clear. And now, Shant's articulation of acting draws upon an unexpectedly spiritual register, referencing Nicolas Cage's notion of "nouveau-shamanistic" performance. For Shant, acting is compelling precisely because it gives access to experiences unavailable in ordinary life. "On stage, you get to experience the full breadth of human experience through performance." This inability to inhabit the extremes and test the moral and emotional limits in front of others, is what leaves theatre forever captivating Shant.

NO EXIT

Revolutionising Stage Performance

After performing a fully self-devised work and two multidisciplinary club-style events, Rotpunkt wanted to transition back to traditional roots and engage with a pre-existing text. And that choice led them to Jean-Paule Sartre's NO EXIT, offering both practical and artistic alignment – a small cast, single location and intense examination of relationships. "The relationships between the characters carry the whole thing. It's a constant switch back and forth of power, of alliances."

Written by Sartre during World War II, the existential examination of responsibility, accountability and moral self-deception that define this play felt uncannily contemporary. It was a text whose philosophy and historical resonance remained grounded and structured, while still providing them with enough space for experimentation and their own theatrical language, thus embodying the values of creativity that define Rotpunkt.

Unlike their first production, where writing and staging happened simultaneously, NO EXIT allows the four to focus on performance. However, this detailed background in production has been invaluable, with their current work bringing in lessons from previous performances, teaching them how to generate, transpose and build upon the magic that they generate in rehearsal spaces. Despite reaching back into traditional scripted theatre roots, their performance space is quite the opposite. Staging NO EXIT at Ern Malley is a tangible embodiment of Rotpunkt's broader commitment to making theatre in the spaces we already inhabit. Adelaide's venue landscape is increasingly inaccessible; however, instead of retreating, the collective have adapted, using bars, pubs and non-traditional venues to impose a newfound immediacy, diversified audience and fewer formal barriers.

Ern Malley feels particularly aligned with their ethos. As a space that not only builds upon Adelaide's social scene, but celebrates arts culture of all forms, their performance within this space stands alongside Ern Malley's values. "We always talk about the crowd we want to make theatre for. People that don't consider themselves theatre people, but would go to live music, poetry readings, or just out to the pub."

It is this deliberate division between play and theatre rallied by Rotpunkt that not only grows the uniqueness of their platform, but encourages many others to reinterpret what they consider 'theatre'. Because, theatre is not the simple red curtain and wooden stage, but a mode of live presentation, defining gigs, readings and rallies. "We consume so much theatre, but we just don't realise that it's theatre." This isn't a problem of audience disinterest, but a narrowing of what the word 'theatre' is allowed to define.

So, with their performance at Ern Malley, Rotpunkt is effectively removing layers of intimidation. Forgetting the parking struggles, formal dress and seating organisation, silent foyers and early closing times. This time, the bar stays open. The conversations continue. The work is not segregated from social life, but embedded within it. Thus, their performance of NO EXIT is not simply a revival of a canonical text, but a test of Rotpunkt's ongoing proposition: that theatre, when removed from academics and understood as a shared, immediate experience, remains necessary to human expression.

4-8 February
[ROTPUNKT]
presents
NO EXIT
By Jean-Paul Sartre
Translated by Paul Bowles
By Arrangement with ORIGIN™ Theatrical
On Behalf of Samuel French
A Concord Theatricals Company
The Ern Malley, Magill Rd